

**Future
Schools
Discovery
Report**

Spring 2023
Future Schools.education



**California
Tour
Inside
Innovative
Schools**

Schools

 d.school
Brightworks
The Nueva School
Millennium School
Design 39 School
Del Lago Academy
High Tech High

Future



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INNOVATION TOUR



In the dynamic landscape of education, California has emerged as a hub of innovative schools, each with its unique approach to redefining the conventional educational experience. In this report, we explore seven of the schools we visited during our latest international tour.

These seven California-based schools each offer a unique approach to education, focusing on innovation, design thinking, hands-on learning, and personal development. By redefining traditional classroom experiences, these institutions are shaping the future of education, inspiring students to become well-rounded, adaptable, and socially conscious individuals, ready to navigate the challenges of the future.

Their models of education extend far beyond their campuses, influencing educators globally to reimagine the educational landscape.

We hope you enjoy our Discovery Report. If you would like to learn about any school in detail or join our waiting list for one of our 2024 tours, please send an email to: events@futureschools.education

Let's begin,

Dave Runge
Director
Future Schools



“ This trip exposed me, not only to tangible examples of how innovation looks in a real school, but reframed my philosophy around education as a whole. ”

– Jamie Towsey
Head of English
Mordialloc College



d.school Stanford

The d.school, affiliated with Stanford University, is renowned for its pioneering work in design thinking and problem-solving, particularly for complex social issues. Our journey into this world of innovation was facilitated by Louie Montoya, who conducted a three-hour workshop on design thinking foundational principles and the application of them in educational settings.

We had the privilege of touring the d.school Learning Lab, where they address challenging problems through hands-on projects, often collaborating with experts from various sectors.

Pictures

1. Original car donation
2. STEM lab wall
3. Swing chairs and desk

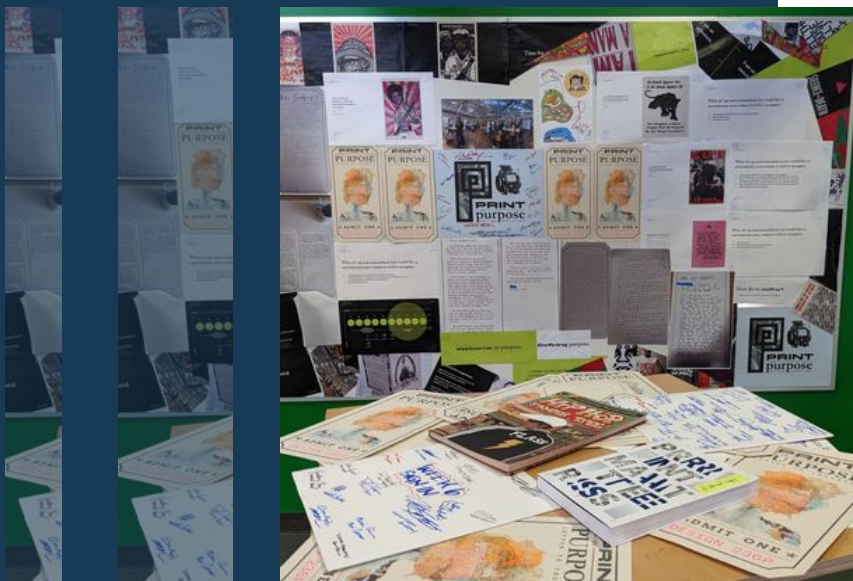
The d.school's reach extends beyond education, as they tackle complex engineering and social problems.

They strive to solve global issues, such as access to clean water in developing regions, business transformation, and

healthcare system enhancements.

The K-12 Lab, within the broader d.school, focuses on the future of education through design thinking and related methodologies.





Key Insights

Bringing it home...

Design methodology imparts transferable skills, emphasising empathy, creative thinking, and interdisciplinary collaboration, equipping individuals with a multifaceted problem-solving approach. These skills can be harnessed effectively to address complex social issues, driving innovative solutions and fostering transformative change in society.



This overseas study tour was a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit a number of well-known innovative schools in California that focus on project based learning.

Although the implementation and structure of this differed across schools the underlying principles of design thinking and student teacher partnership in co-designing the learning was evident.

Viewing these various models was inspiring and provided me with the opportunity to gain insight in how such models could be practically applied in my school context.



*- Michelle Roberts
Principal
Mordialloc College*

Brightworks

Situated in San Francisco, Brightworks is a progressive school founded with the mission of fostering student agency and empowerment. It operates out of an old military barracks, offering a unique setting for its 200 students.

Brightworks embraces project-based learning, hands-on experiences, and design thinking to encourage students to become part of the solution to complex global challenges.

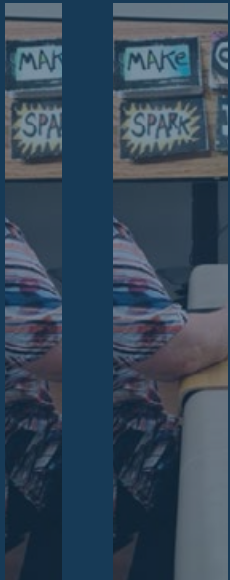
We picked up that it's not just about the staff imparting knowledge; it's about unlocking the latent potential within students. The educators, with an unwavering faith in their students' capabilities, create a space where young minds can step into their roles as change-makers.

The empowerment given to these students is palpable and vibrant, creating an atmosphere where innovation and transformation are not just buzzwords but a way of life.

Picture

1. The team brainstorming with Gever Tulley, Founder.





Key Insights

Transferrable skills like agency, empowerment, and personal responsibility underscore the latent potential of students. When unleashed, young people emerge as the central authors of their own learning and personal development journey. This empowerment marks a transformative shift towards self-directed learning.



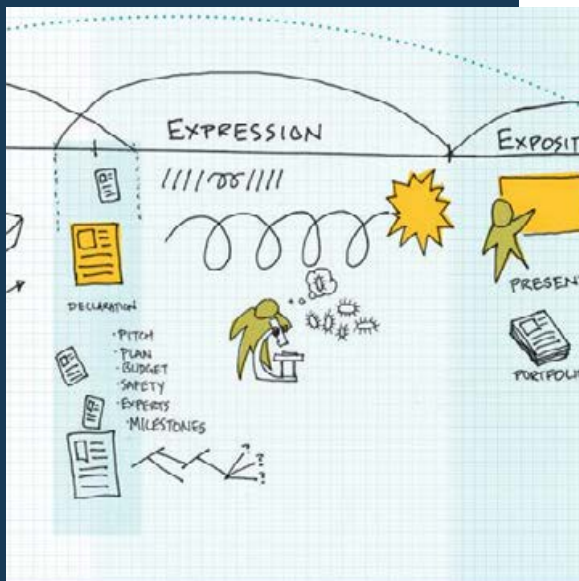
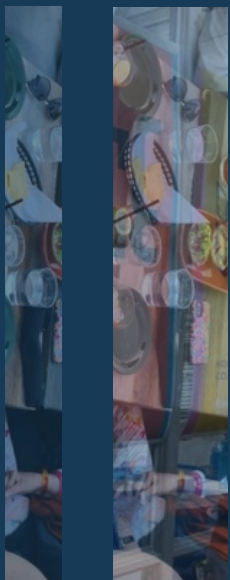
I went into this tour as more of a novice in the field of project-based learning.

I found the school visits allowed me to fast-track to deeper knowledge by seeing these philosophical underpinnings in practice in a wide range of educational and innovative settings.

Passionate educators and engaged students immersed me in their unique approaches to learning, leaving me thoroughly convinced.

I was impressed by the remarkable student engagement, the positive challenge they felt in the projects and learning process, how they could articulate the kind of learner that they were and the practical and higher order thinking skills they were able to apply in the process.

*- Elizabeth Scheu
Burnie Campus Principal
Leighland Christian School*





Founded several decades ago, the Nueva School in Hillsborough is designed to support gifted learners discover and develop their passions, and learn to make choices that positively and profoundly impact the world.

Without relying on traditional standardised testing or comparative data, they focus on physical and observational assessments, emphasizing wellbeing, personal exploration, and connections with nature.



Pictures

1. Group Discussion
2. Lunch room
3. STEM room
4. Learning garden



Key Insights

- > Young people are taught to become more responsive, agile, and adaptable change-makers, fostering a deeper focus on their humanity.
- > Design Thinking is harnessed to connect high intellect with the aim of contributing to the world in meaningful and positive ways, emphasizing innovation and problem-solving.
- > A culture of connectedness and care is cultivated for young people, creating an environment that nurtures their personal and intellectual growth, encouraging them to make a positive impact on society.

Millennium School

Nestled in a challenging neighbourhood in San Francisco, Millennium School stands as a self-sustaining institution. It operates independently without any government funding.

The school's ethos places a strong emphasis on cultivating compassion, empathy, and self-discovery, deliberately eschewing conventional academic metrics in favour of fostering holistic, real-world learning experiences immersed in the local community.

This school is a great example of using design thinking to solve complex social issues.

Pictures

1. Arts classroom
2. Street art that students review and integrate into their creative journey.



The art class began with a 15-minute classroom activity, setting the stage for an entire day dedicated to exploring the history, meaning, and context of street art, as well as delving into the motivations behind street artists. This immersive program places a strong emphasis on connecting with the local community, making it an integral part of their educational experience.



Brainstorming
is a creativity
catalyst,
where ideas
collide,
synthesize,
and spark
innovation

Design 39 Campus

Design 39 Campus is a unique public school with a strong emphasis on design thinking, and this focus has been central to its identity since its inception.

Situated in District 39, a team was assembled to create a groundbreaking school project that would serve the community in innovative ways.

After seeking inspiration from Stanford and various design studios worldwide, the decision was made to place design at the core of this educational endeavour.

This approach extended to every facet of the school, from its architectural design to the curriculum, staff recruitment, and student experience.

Design thinking methodology was the guiding force behind the creation of collaborative learning environments, with spaces intentionally designed to foster co-design, connection, and interaction.

Unlike traditional schools with rows of desks, Design 39 featured flexible and dynamic learning areas with cushions, break out spaces, and an emphasis on collaborative activities to facilitate creative collaboration and meaningful interactions.

Pictures

1. Dave and the Head of School.
2. Entering via main entrance





Upon entering the school, the conventional concept of a front office was transformed into an open-plan co-working space, where students and teachers worked together. Here, anyone you encountered, whether a student or a principal, would warmly greet and assist you.

This empowerment of all members of the school community created an inclusive and dynamic environment, where the role of a principal was not tied to formalities.



The counseling team at Design 39 took an innovative approach to wellbeing, actively engaging with students by teaching well-being lessons in classrooms. Instead of solely offering reactive counseling services, they provided proactive guidance and support, focusing on brain structure, processing grief, and other important topics. This approach allowed them to be part of the students' daily lives, rather than just being available behind a glass window.



A distinct practice at Design 39 was the daily one-hour meeting where design methodology was employed to plan the school's activities and experiences for both students and staff. Unlike the traditional technical meetings seen in many schools, these sessions were characterised by adaptive design work. Staff members used design studios, adopting the mindset of designers, to create a dynamic and adaptable environment that responded to the needs and aspirations of the school's community.



Del Lago Academy

Del Lago Academy is a fully funded public school that envisions its students as the architects of innovation and the creators of meaningful change. Their mission? To empower students, teaching them that "innovators change the world." This message is made manifest through a rich tapestry of visual cues, all meticulously crafted to inspire the next generation of world-changers.

The walls of Del Lago Academy resonate with aspiration, a vision that's unwaveringly clear. As you explore the campus, you'll find a vivid demonstration of their value proposition – innovators, indeed, change the world. It's a mantra that echoes in their corridors, feeding not just young minds but also the world's hunger for transformative ideas and solutions.



Pictures

1. Vision boards
2. Mission banner
3. Exterior





But it's not just the walls that speak of change; it's the students themselves.

At Del Lago Academy, the emphasis is not only on empowering students but also on guiding them to take ownership of their innovative potential.

The teachers, too, play their part in bringing this vision to life through their pedagogy. However, something here feels different, a unique approach that sets Del Lago Academy apart from the rest.

Del Lago Academy stands as a testament to the power of visual signals and empowering education, inspiring a generation to reach out and change the world.



Key Insights

Culture Building

The first four days of the academic year are dedicated to establishing and reinforcing a positive school culture, emphasizing social agreements, and ensuring that all members of the school community are aligned in their values and expectations.

Collaborative Culture

The school has successfully cultivated a robust collaborative culture among its teaching staff, where educators actively work together and are enthusiastic about learning from one another, creating an environment that fosters professional development and knowledge sharing.

Internship Program

The school boasts a strong internship program that involves every student, providing them with valuable real-world experiences that enhance their education and career readiness.

Collective Efficacy

Del Lago's collaborative culture plays a pivotal role in achieving its vision, as the staff collectively believe in their ability to succeed. What sets them apart is their commitment to building a culture that supports this belief in collective efficacy, empowering them to work together toward common goals.



//
**A well
designed
and
facilitated
project is
the
teacher** //



High Tech High

High Tech High, a school with a 20-year history, is a true testament to the transformative power of education.

With a unique dedication to project-based learning deeply anchored in real-world meaning and impact, the school seamlessly combines direct teacher-led instruction with project-based learning.

This harmonious blend invites students to apply their foundational knowledge to projects that carry not just academic weight but also social and real-world significance.

The hallmark of High Tech High's pedagogy is its unwavering commitment to making learning deeply meaningful. It's not about mundane tasks like building widgets or reassembling bike parts; it's about empowering young minds to pursue their passions and create a lasting

impact on the world. Autonomy and professional trust are the driving forces in the hearts of the teachers who guide these young minds through their educational journey.

Key Insights

> At HTH, the project itself becomes the primary teaching tool, with well-designed and expertly facilitated projects serving as the teachers, offering students hands-on, real-world education.

> Professional Autonomy and Trust: The essence of the HTH experience lies in the level of professional agency and trust afforded to educators, allowing them to tailor the learning journey to each student's unique needs.

> Physical Space as an Educational Canvas: The school's physical environment serves as a canvas for promoting and harnessing students' work, creating a dynamic, extended mind, where every wall and corner is utilized for educational expression and inspiration.

Picture

1. Every wall is a canvas

FutureSchools.education



Every inch of High Tech High, including the most unexpected places like the entrance outside the restroom, serves as a canvas for students to express themselves, demonstrating their unique perspectives and passions.

This approach to education is a balanced one. While you might think it's all about projects all the time, in reality, 50% of the learning journey is dedicated to teacher-led, collaborative, and conventional classroom practices you'd find in most schools.

This foundational learning sets the stage for the second act: application. Instead of sitting down for tests, the students roll up their sleeves to breathe

life into their knowledge through real-world projects. Their creative ideas are honed and put to the test as they use their skills to make a meaningful impact on society.



Picture 1. Drinking fountains with student's artwork decorating the walls.

Thank you...

Future Schools would like to thank our hosts, guides, and schools we visited. For more information on each school, please visit their websites listed below.

If you would like to join us on future tours, please send your expression of interest to:

✉ events@futureschools.education



d.school

<https://dschool.stanford.edu/>



Brightworks

<https://www.sfbrightworks.org/>



The Nueva School

<https://www.nuevaschool.org/>



Millennium School

<https://www.millenniumschool.org/>



Design 39 School

<https://design39campus.com/>



Del Lago Academy

<https://www.dellagoacademy.org/>



High Tech High

<https://www.hightechhigh.org/>



How to Build an Adaptive Education System.

As our world becomes ever more complex and the pace of change continues to accelerate, the education system has a pivotal role in equipping society with the skills and capacities to adapt, grow and shape this emerging future.

We need an education system that, alongside core literacy and numeracy development, teaches students to problem-solve, think critically, collaborate and most importantly, be resilient and adaptable.

The challenge seems not to be articulating the 'why' for system evolution but rather providing a pathway to the 'how'. In this paper, we have included a number of frameworks and tools that have been useful in supporting teams, leaders, schools, departments, associations and governing bodies progress change in their areas of influence

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Evolving culture and building adaptive capacity in schools.

